x Low Tar Cigarettes [Meal]

1. **Page Title:**

   Low Tar Cigarettes

2. **Anchor Links (if applicable)**

3. **Primary Page Content**

Low-Tar Cigarettes:[Meal]

Understanding Tar and Nicotine Numbers: What They Mean and What They Don't Mean

No two smokers smoke cigarettes exactly the same way. The tar and nicotine yield numbers that are reported for cigarette brands are not meant (and were never intended) to communicate the precise amount of tar or nicotine inhaled by any individual smoker from any particular cigarette. These numbers come from standardized testing methods, which compare different brands when smoked by a machine under identical laboratory conditions. As regulators have said since their introduction, these tests - including those developed in cooperation with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the International Standards Organization (ISO) - show the *relative* differences *in yields among brands, assuming that each brand is held and smoked the same way as it is in the machine.*

It is reported that some consumers believe that their cigarette delivers exactly the amount of tar and nicotine from each cigarette that the test reports. The FTC recently told smokers that "in looking at 'tar' and nicotine numbers, you need to know that the amount of 'tar' and nicotine you get will vary significantly depending on how you smoke the cigarettes."

Using the tar numbers as a reference point, we describe some of our brands with terms such as "light" and "ultra light." However, **these brand descriptors, like the reported numbers themselves, have never indicated precisely how much tar or nicotine a particular smoker will inhale at any given time.** Although we believe that descriptors serve as useful points of comparison for cigarette brands regarding characteristics such as strength of taste and reported tar yield, **we do not imply in our marketing, and smokers should not assume, that "light" or "ultra light" brands are "safe," or are "safer" than full-flavor brands.**

An additional word for smokers who may be interested in obtaining less tar and nicotine from their cigarettes: It is claimed that smokers "compensate" for the reduced tar and nicotine yields of some brands by smoking them differently from smokers of higher yield brands. For example, they may take more or larger puffs, smoke more of the cigarette or block ventilation holes that contribute to the lower reported yields of some brands. **Generally speaking, the more intensely a smoker smokes a cigarette, the more tar and nicotine he or she will inhale from that cigarette.**

Machine Tests of Tar and Nicotine Yields

Cigarette companies measure average per cigarette yields of tar and nicotine by following standardized machine testing methods. For example, the U.S. companies follow the method that was developed in cooperation with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in 1967, and has historically been referred to as the "FTC method." In many other countries around the world, a

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similar method developed by the International Standards Organization is utilized. In Japan, a slightly different method developed by the Tobacco Institute of Japan is used. These methods compare the tar and nicotine yields of different brands of cigarettes when smoked by a machine under identical laboratory conditions, and indicate their relative differences in yields.

However, the machine tests *"smoke" each brand in the same manner.* For example, in the FTC method, the machine takes one two-second puff, of a specific volume (35 milliliters) of smoke, each minute, and the test requires that the cigarette be inserted to a specified depth on the cigarette filter and "smoked" to a specified length of the cigarette rod. Other methods employ similar parameters.

These machine methods were never intended to reflect what and how smokers actually inhale. Indeed, in 1967 when the FTC announced the completion of its trial tests of the current method, it stated that "[n]o test can precisely duplicate conditions of actual human smoking and, within fairly wide limits, no one method can be said to be either 'right' or 'wrong'...the purpose of testing is not to determine the amount of tar and nicotine inhaled by any human smoker, but rather to determine the amount of tar and nicotine generated when a cigarette is smoked by machine in accordance with the prescribed method."

In 1997, the FTC proposed revisions to its test method, and is currently reevaluating it and developing specific recommendations on its future.

In light of these limitations, **smokers should not assume that the machine test numbers printed in the packages or advertisements for their preferred brand indicate with precision the actual amount of tar and nicotine that they will inhale from any particular cigarette**. In addition, they should not assume that these numbers indicate with precision the relative amount of tar and nicotine that they will inhale from their preferred brand of cigarettes as compared to any other brand.

Philip Morris' Use of Brand Descriptors

Philip Morris frequently describes cigarette brands using terms such as "full flavor," "light" and "ultra light." These terms are commonly referred to as "descriptors," and facilitate consumers' ability to distinguish among different product offerings.

Descriptors are generally used as a point of comparison (with respect to attributes such as strength of taste and flavor, and tar/nicotine yield as measured by a machine method) for a cigarette brand in a particular country in order to distinguish it from other brands on the market in that country. **Smokers should not assume that brand descriptors such as "light" or "ultra light" indicate with precision either the actual amount of tar and nicotine that they will inhale from any particular cigarette, or the relative amount as compared to competing cigarette brands**. Some researchers report that consumers who smoke "light" cigarettes inhale as much tar and nicotine as from full-flavor brands.

Philip Morris does not imply in its marketing, and smokers should not assume, that lower-yielding brands are "safe," or are "safer" than full-flavor brands. Health warnings are required on *all* of our brands, irrespective of their tar and nicotine yields. The FTC has recently stated that "...if consumers are concerned about the health effects of smoking cigarettes they should stop smoking...Simply put, there is no such thing as a safe smoke." The Commission also reiterates that "[t]he National Cancer Institute and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration stated in comments that new data suggests that the limited health benefits, previously believed to be associated with lower tar and nicotine cigarettes, may not exist."

It is important to remember that, **as of today, there is no cigarette on the market which the public health community endorses as offering "reduced risk," and it continues to be the**

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case that, if smokers are concerned about the risks of smoking, quitting is by far their best alternative for reducing those risks.

However, because smokers have varying preferences, Philip Morris offers products with differing yields of tar and nicotine, as measured by one of the machine methods. We believe that it is appropriate to continue to differentiate our brands on this basis, and that descriptors such as "light" and "ultra light" help communicate these differences to adult smokers.

4. **Featured Content Area**

5. **Internal Links**

View a diagram pointing out the typical location of ventilation holes on our cigarette brands that utilize them.

6. **External Links**

Choose from the following for views of the public health community regarding lower-tar cigarettes:

- Article from the National Cancer Institute
- Analysis from the U.S. Department of Health
- Excerpts from the United Kingdom's Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health
- An article by tobacco control advocates

If you are interested in reading more about smokers' "compensation" and how it could affect your intake of tar and nicotine, choose from the following for articles relating to "compensatory" smoking behavior:

- From the FTC
- Institute of Medicine
- From tobacco control advocates
- A bibliography of additional references

Click here to access the FTC's 1967 press release describing the limitations of standardized machine tests.

Click here to see the introduction to comments on FTC's proposed revisions of cigarette testing methods submitted by major U.S. tobacco manufacturers.

Choose from the following if you want to find out the reported yields of PM USA's brands, or more information about the testing methods:

- The reported yields of Philip Morris USA's brands.
- Information regarding machine tests.
- The introduction to 1998 tobacco industry comments about the U.S. machine test method.
- The FTC's 1999 press release and analysis describing the limitations of yield numbers generated by machine tests.

Choose from the following for articles reporting that some smokers have misunderstood the "tar" and nicotine numbers:

- An article by tobacco control advocates
- Article from the National Cancer Institute

Mike Polic, PM USA Editorial Services Department – (917) 663-2099; policmike@pmusa.com

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For more information on "tar" and nicotine testing, click on the links below:

- The FTC's 1998 letter discussing its reevaluation of the test.
- Material on this subject from the Australian government (see pages 43-44 of the PDF file).

If you are interested in more information on brand descriptors:

- FTC press release stating that "there is no such thing as a safe smoke".
- More detail on our position on brand descriptors

Choose from the following to read reports of some researchers that consumers who smoke "light" cigarettes inhale as much "tar" and nicotine as from full-flavor brands:

- From the FTC
- Institute of Medicine
- From tobacco control advocates
- A bibliography of additional references

Choose from the following to read reports of some researchers that indicate, as the FTC has stated, "the limited health benefits, previously believed to be associated with lower tar and nicotine cigarettes, may not exist":

- Analysis from the U.S. Department of Health
- Excerpts from the United Kingdom's Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health
- An article by tobacco control advocates
- Article from the National Cancer Institute

Mike Folie, PM USA Editorial Services Department – (917) 663-2099; folieml@pmusa.com

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